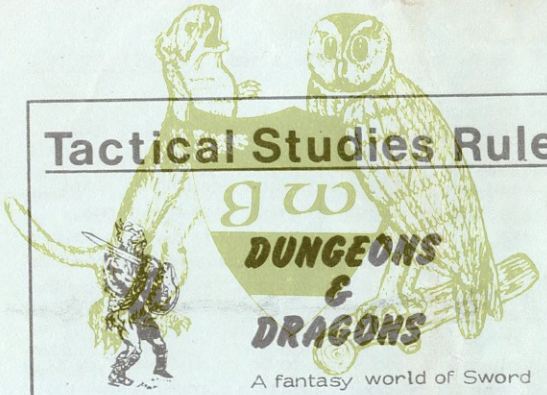
Tactical Studies Rules



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ELDRITCH WIZARDRY

Supplement 3 to D&D – £3.40 inc p&p

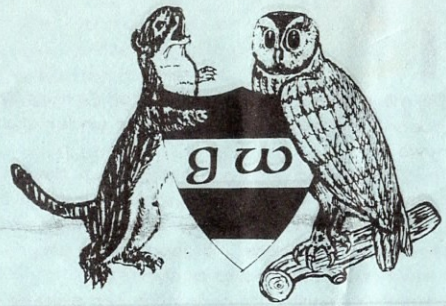
En Garde

– £2.75 inc p&p

Role playing game of duelling and social climing as reviewed in O&W 15.

All the items on this page are available from: GAMES WORKSHOP
15 BOLINGBROKE ROAD
LONDON W14

No. 16



15p

May 1976

the newsletter from games workshop 15 bolingbroke road london w14

ELDRITCH WIZARDRY

What? Yes, the third D&D supplement is out and it's exceedingly useful in that it adds a new dimension to the game. The idea behind it is to put back the mystery, uncertainty and danger into D&D to make it once more the challange it used to be. With all the D&D sets around together with the first two supplements, players as well as dungeonmasters are so well aware of the rules that it has become almost impossible to lure players into danger. But, Eldritch Wizardry will change all that especially with the introduction of psionic ability– the unknown power of the mind. Psionic ability may be found amongst fighting men, magic-users, clerics or even thieves. After all six normal ability categories have been rolled, and a player has selected a character type, that character if it has an unmodified score of 15 or more in intelligence, wisdom or charisma may check to see if it has psionic ability in addition by rolling percentage dice. A score of 91 or more indicates that a character has the ability. Psionic ability is, however, affected by a character's psychic potential and this is determined by a second dice roll.

Psionic combat is, to say the least, a pretty involved affair with attack and defence modes, psionic versus psionic and psionic versus non-psionic tables, special attack matrices, damage tables and more. Psionic abilities for characters are well tabulated and divided between the three types. A decent explanation of each ability is also given.

Now onto the monsters and lots of new ones there are too including such horrors as brain moles and cerebral parasites! The thing about a monster with psionic ability is that you never know what's going on in his mind so to speak. Again, full explanation of these hostile and benign creatures is given together with a reference table of the normal number appearing, armour class, hit dice etc type. Believe me, they are pretty vile and you will certainly have to ' get your head together ' to deal with them. A section of Eldritch Wizardry also deals with new treasures e.g. The Invulnerable Coat of Arn, The Rod of Seven Parts and The Eye of Vecna. These are all artifacts and relics of tremendous power but it is up to the dungeon-master to decide what these items can actually do. Players are only given rumours to go on and each item although being described is only given a list of suggested powers in the supplement. Five tables of Artifacts & Relics offer thousands of permutations for the power of the item.

There are also additional tables for astral and ethereal encounters in the Underworld and Wilderness adventures including a table for psionic encounters.

Another section of the supplement deals with a new subclass of clerics, the Druid. These are similar to the monster of the same name as described in Greyhawk. They are neutral in

(Turn to p. 3)

owl & weasel

Editorial

"Hello operator, could you give me the telephone number of Games Workshop please?"
"I'm sorry caller, but there doesn't appear to be a number under that name."
"Oh.....well, thanks anyway."

Has this conversation ever been held by you? If so, sorry, but there's a reason. As many of you know, Games Workshop is not, as yet, a full time occupation for Steve and myself. Therefore, as we can't always guarentee being in, we think it better not to make our phone number generally available. However telegrams, pigeon post, pony express or even plain old GPO escorted letters will always be replied to post haste.

A most important announcement this month concerns the temporary closure of Games Workshop. As stated last month, Steve and I are going to the United States from the first week in July until mid September on a business cum pleasure trip. We will be visiting TSR and also hope to make it to Origins II. This means, of course, that there will be no Weasel in August and letters won't be replied to during the period of our stay. Time is also running out for us to be able to produce the June issue. Hopefully we will put a double issue next month for June/July but this can only be done with your help. We are behind schedule this month because we just don't get enough subscriber articles. You've heard it all before but it is a fact. There are over 250 of you out there and yet we receive on average only one article per month. We obviously haven't got the time or the money to review all the games in existence. Please do what you can whether it be an article on a new game, obscure game, orbituary column, variation-on-a-theme dept., D&D Society or just a letter. If articles aren't your line, how about a couple of jokes, short story or cartoon. There must be something you can do - please?

There's a rumour going around that we are staging a D&D Con on the 19th June. This rumour has chinese whispered its way from a maybe to a definitely by being announced in John Mansfield's newsletter, Signal. Sad, but it's not true. John kindly gave us the name and address of a most suitable venue for such a Con and everything was going OK until the owners of the venue decided to change their hiring charges. The silly money they were now asking for the room forced us to cancel the booking. Unfortunately in the meantime, John had gone to print. However, we do hope to book a replacement venue for the first UK D&D Con sometime in the Autumn.

How many Weasel readers spotted our deliberate mistake last month? We stated that Present Arms '76 was to be held on May 7th and 8th. Silly us. It was, in fact, the week after on May 15th and 16th and we suffered more than most by being double booked for that weekend. After having put on a very enjoyable game of D&D at Just Games, meeting lots of lawful Weasel readers, we had to zoom off to Southend to set up our stall. Alas, we arrived too late for any hard selling of dubious games literature on Saturday and had to be content with a rock eating, bingo playing, beer swilling, amusement arcading night on the prom. Still, Sunday was pretty good except for the cheese sandwich I won off Steve after having trounced him at Basketball Strategy.

It would appear that times are becoming hard for the poor old games manufacturer. With the recent supposed boom in the adult games market, companies both old and new have been busy churning out games at a ridiculous rate so that there are now literally hundreds to choose from. Needless to say not all sell well and some companies are beginning to fall on stony ground, notably Intellect who have been forced to appoint a Receiver to handle their affairs. Let's hope that he succeeds in his rescue operation because it would be sad to see Intellect games disappear off the face of the Earth for they at least tried to raise the status of British adult games. Apparently there a couple of other companies hanging on to business by the skin of their gnashers too. A bit gloomy isn't it?

Fortunately for thee, friends and neighbours, here endeth this month's page of absolute drivel. But there'll be more next month, ha, ha. Toodlepip.

Ian

P.S. Would you believe that Owl & Weasel is Games Workshop's monthly pile of wombat's do?

P.P.S. Those guilty for the mess are Ian Livingstone and Steve Jackson.

ELDRITCH WIZARDRY (cont. from p.1)

nature and are not involved with humans, or with helping them, as they are in protecting plants and animals. Besides the ability to cast spells, Druids are allowed some weoponry and may wear non-metallic armour. The spells are tabulated and explained in detail up to 7th level and it would appear that Druids need a fair amount of mistletoe about their person for purposes other than grabbing beefy-thighed secretaries on Christmas Eve.

There's no doubt about it, Eldritch Wizardry is an excellent spplement in that it puts the odds back in favour of the dungeonmaster and gives the once confident 10th and 11th player/characters something new to deal with.

There is only one drawback and that is with the introduction of psionic ability, the game is going to become even more complicated and technical with result that there will be an even bigger gap between rank novices and the experienced dungeoneers.

So, that is supplement three. I wonder what Messrs Gygax and Blume will possibly dream up for supplement four? Surely there is nothing left.....is there?

++IL++

DIPLOMACY WORLD

DIPLOMACY WORLD is a quarterly magazine on Diplomacy, which is edited by Walter Buchanan, R. R. 3, Box 324, Lebanon, IN 46052. The purpose of each 40-page offset issue is to present a broad overview of the postal Diplomacy hobby by printing articles on good play, carrying the Hoosier Archives Demonstration Game with expert analysis, listing rating systems, publishing letters to the editor, listing game openings and zine news, and printing a complete variant game and map with each issue. In short, anything of a general interest to the Diplomacy community is fair game for DIPLOMACY WORLD. Subscriptions sell for $4.00 per year, ($4.50 outside the U.S.). Checks should be in U.S. funds and made payable to "Walter Buchanan."

DIPLOMACY WORLD

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D and D Society News

To be fair to the non-addicts of D&D we are keeping Society News down to a minimum this month in view of the heavy concentration on D&D in this month's Weasel.

We've got a few more members:

Martin Prime, 1 Holmsdale Close, Westcliffe-on-Sea, Essex. D/master.
John Abbot Jnr., 61 Haig Road West, Plaistow, London E13. D/master.
Andy Evans, 36 Byrnmill Terrace, Byrnmill, Swansea.
Malcolm Davies, 40 Devonshire Road, Harrow, Middlesex. D/master (change of address only).

What's happening? Well, there's a mammoth game of D&D to be had at Hartley Patterson's over the Spring Bank holiday. If you didn't know, Hartley lives at 'Finches', 7 Cambridge Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks. Dungeoneering starts on the night of Friday, 28th May and finishes late Sunday, 30th May. Don't forget to bring your own sleeping bags, eyelid props, iron rations, silver mirrors, magic war hammers etc. as Hartley's supplies aren't enchanted enough to feed 40,000 fighting men.

Still no sign of Strategic Review No.7 although Eldritch Wizardry will be more than enough to keep most D&D freaks quiet for a while.

Finally please note that there will NOT be a D&D Con in London on 19th June as rumoured (see Editorial) but we are making plans to hold one in the Autumn.

++IL++

SUBSCRIBE

Make sure of your monthly Weasel by taking out a subscription. Simply let us have a cheque, P.O. (both payable to 'Games Workshop' please) or cash for any amount over £1. The Weasel will be sent to you as it is printed and you will be notified when your credit is running out. Each issue costs 15p + 6½p postage.

Book Review

Here are brief reviews of five hardback, well illustrated books on games. They are so different in content and style that any real games player will need at least one of them to further his interest and it is hoped that these brief notes will make it clear which book is for you.

A GAMUT OF GAMES by Sidney Sackson, published by Nelson, 196 pages, many illustrations; £2.25.
This book contains 38 games, collected by (and many invented by) perhaps the greatest gamesman of them all. A few are oldies that he has rescued but most are new. All are of interest although in a few the scoring rules seem either complex or not quite logical. There are dice games, board games, cards, pencil and paper games.....and the key point is that few of them are found in any other books. I doubt if you know more than six of them- I didn't. A few years ago, Don Turnbull in "Albion" said "no serious games enthusiast can afford to be without a copy". That sentence is as full a review as you need.

THE INDOOR GAMES BOOK by Andrew Pennycock, published by Faber, 287 pages, many diagrams; £2.50.
In contrast, here are 120 family favourite games, most of them already known to you. The explanations are very clear and simple- written for children, but none the worse for that. The harder entries are illustrated by sample games with comments. The best buy if you want a simple rule book for the games you already play, or know about vaguely.

THE WAY TO PLAY by the Diagram Group, published by Paddington Press; £6.95.
That's a lot of money; but this is a lot of book, weighing 2½ lbs. On 320 large (11"x 8") pages, 5,000 coloured diagrams with short texts are used to explain 2,000 games. (Those are the publisher's figures, and not strictly comparable to the numbers of games and illustrations quoted for the other books; but there are certainly thousands.) There's not much for the board gamer here- only about a seventh of the volume- but plenty of interest otherwise, with dice, card, domino, word, table and other games galore; difficult to put this one down once you've started dipping into it. If you can afford it, its certainly worth the money- but not if board games are your main interest.

BOARD AND TABLE GAMES FROM MANY CIVILISATIONS Volume 2 by R.C. Bell; published by Oxford University Press, 155 pages, 113 diagrams, 26 plates; £2.75.
No doubt everyone already has Vol. 1 (paperback; 230 pages, 164 illustrations- only 75 pence!) so they'll know what to expect here. Not such good value as vol. 1, but the gmes are on the whole less familiar and so the book can be more useful. Mainly board games, but dice and domino types as well. The two volumes together are better value for the board gamer than "The Way To Play" as there are very few of the world's older board games that have escaped capture in their pages.

MODERN BOARD GAMES edited by David Pritchard, published by William Luscombe, 144 pages, 84 diagrams; £3.95.
Here, seven experts describe 13 popular commercial board games. (Scrabble, Diplomacy, Decline & Fall, Sigma File, Mastermind, Monopoly, Twixt, Cleudo, Tri-tactics, Speculate, Ploy, Confrontation and Escape from Colditz.) Inevitably, the result is uneven. Some games have more space than seems to be justified- Colditz, Mastermind, Cleudo and Tri-tactics, for instance; though these are mostly well written chapters. Twixt is the sort of sterile, abstract draw-prone game I can't raise any enthusiasm for. Probably the best chapters are those on Diplomacy and Decline and Fall, both written by their respective inventors. The only real disaster is the chapter on Monopoly; just seven pages, consisting merely of vague generalisations- often misleading- which can be of little value to anyone who has played more than once. No-one will be satisfied with the selection of 13 games but this selection is at least as good as your 13 or mine. Few people will be interested in more than half of these games yet I already know of one case where a reader has gone on to buy more games as a result of reading the extra chapters here. If that is the case with you, then it's worth the price. However, I must admit that I was a little disappointed although none of the games is covered in any of the other books listed.
So there you are, five books on games, none of them really comparable with the others as they cover such different sectors of the field. Which is the book for you depends on which part of this absorbing hobby you are interested in but the order in which I have listed them is not a random one.

++David Watts++

++Most of these books you should be able to obtain at your local book or games shop, but if you do have any difficulty in obtaining them, then David can supply them at the prices listed plus part postage of 20p for one or 30p for two or more. His address is 32 Eastleigh Drive, Milford Haven SA73 2LY. IL++

LETTERS

Dear O&W,

I have never been a great fan of Draughts, probably because I always lose, but LASCA is different. It surely deserves to rate as one of the world's great games. I was, therefore, agreeably surprised to see Eric Palmer's article in O&W15.
There are, however, two errors in his account. Although it is true that LASCA may be played on a standard chess/draughts board, it needs to have the end vertical and the end horizontal row blocked off so as to make a 7 x 7 board with the colour which is used for playing occupying all four corner squares. This is necessary because one method of winning is to leave your opponent without a legal move - on an 8 x 8 board, a man could oscillate between the two corner squares forever.
You need, therefore, only 11 men of each colour. Originally the men were plain on one face and marked on the other so that when they reached the other side they could be turned over to denote promotion. The F.X. Schmidt version has transparent and opaque red and green pieces which are exchanged as Eric Palmer describes. Incidentally, if he or anybody knows where to obtain draughts men in four different colours and which also interlock I'd be grateful to learn. I had difficulty in obtaining them in three different colours and was eventually reduced to painting some a fourth colour.
I have, however, a limited number of unusual but attractively designed LASCA boards (slight seconds), hand mounted on stiff cardboard, for £1.20 including p&p and an even more limited number of suitable pieces for 50p a set including p&p which I will gladly send to any Weaselers who are interested.

Yours sincerely,
Kendall Johns, 7 Worslade Rd., London SW17.

Dear O&W,
I'm just crazy about your yoghurt. Have you any more yummy recipes?

Yours mouth-wateringly,
Suzy Creamcheese

++But of course. To make the best pickled onions you've ever tasted all you need is:
1 lb of small pickling onions
6 peppercorns
2 cloves
1 small bottle of glacial acetic acid (from chemists)
1 jam jar (empty)
salt

Peel the onions (wearing goggles) and sprinkle about a teaspoonful of salt over them. Leave for a couple of hours and in the meantime prepare the pickling solution. This is done by diluting the acetic acid with about 10 to 15 parts of water. Put the onions, peppercorns and cloves in the jam jar, pour in the solution up to the brim, screw the lid on, leave for a week and Bob's your armpit. Mmmmm. IL++

Dear O&W,
I own a Triumph TR3 and wonder why you never feature any articles on car maintenance.

Regards,
Roger Best

Dear O&W,
I own a Triumph TR5 and wonder why you never feature any articles on sheep shearing.

Best Wishes,
Mike Parnell-King

Dear O&W,
Why are all these strange letters in your supposed games magazine?

Cheers,
Ian Livingstone ++Don't ask me. IL++

Friday in Dundee

Well, it had to happen – the first attempt by the Japanese to break into the Western dominated board games market. Friday in Dundee is manufactured by the Shioto Corporation and games are something of a change for a company usually associated with the manufacture of surgical equipment. However, the Japanese, being quick to recognise a growth sales area and eager to make a fast yen are never out of the race long.

Realising that 'role playing' games such as Dungeons and Dragons and En Garde are fast becoming a new trend, Shioto have released Friday in Dundee to cash in on this expanding market.

Like D&D and En Garde, there is no board or much equipment. What you get for your money is a box which contains a town plan of Dundee, three rule booklets, and, in the exceptional case of wrong packaging, a Honda 50 repair manual.

One of the players must elect to become gamesmaster and the others assume the role of either a lorry driver, bank clerk, V.A.T. inspector or professional footballer depending on totals of throwing three dice for each of the following categories: Ability, Intelligence, Personality and Humour.

Each character type has its own prime requisite category and, for example, to become a V.A.T. inspector you must throw a very low total for 'Humour' backed up by a low total for 'Personality'.

The object of the game is to accumulate Benefit Points which are gained by players carrying out various objectives related to their character type during time periods of one week. The rules seem a bit vague here (probably the translation) but it would appear that it is up to the gamesmaster to decide what is reasonable for a player's character to be able to do during any given week. Before play can actually start the gamesmaster must mark out on the town plan various buildings and places which are relevant to the characters e.g. pubs, discos, banks, bingo halls, social security offices etc. Unlike D&D, where players have to map out the paths as they explore the dungeons, Friday in Dundee players are given the marked out plan by the gamesmaster from which to prepare their weekly programme.

All communication must be with the gamesmaster unless the players wish to do dealings with each other ie. the V.A.T. inspector might approach the footballer in connection with his business interests. Benefit points are awarded by the gamesmaster referring to a table in the rules as a guide but really on how he evaluates the success of a player's character during a confrontation. A problem we found when playing was how could a gamesmaster remain objective in his awarding of points when the confrontations are with himself?

Although more points are awarded to a player for getting the upperhand in a direct confrontation with the gamesmaster or another player, extra points can also be picked up by stating a character's diary of events for the week; these events requiring no interaction between players. The following are usually allocated good points:-

BANK CLERK: collects stamps, watches Crossroads without fail twice a week, lives with parents, owns Ford Cortina, drinks ginger beer, likes Tony Blackburn, holidays at grandparents' cottage in North Wales, eats crab paste sandwiches everyday at lunch, engaged to girl next door, saves £2 a week and keeps goldfish.

PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLER: owns at least one boutique, likes to be seen at discos, thinks Albert Einstein pleys for Bayern Munich, never has dandruff, loves Spanish holidays, parks on double yellow lines, goes to hospital once a week to check suspect cartilage and smells of aftershave.

LORRY DRIVER: puts vinegar on everything, smokes 40 cigarettes a day, would willingly draw blood to protect the good name of Manchester United, plays darts, bets on dogs (loses), drinks Watney's Red (a lot), likes girls with enormous boobs, earns £80 a week but hates the rich who earn £4,000 per year, has six kids and only changes his socks once a week.

V.A.T. INSPECTOR: wears baggy nylon shirts, always misses the point in jokes, steam locomotive expert, always has short back and sides haircut, hates foreigners, eats roast beef every Sunday, carries four pencils in top pocket, attends charity functions, paints house in orange and purple, reads Plain Truth, knows pop stars can't play a note and never drives over 30 m.p.h.

However, despite the fun of thinking of things for your character to do during the week, by far the most enjoyable part of the game is the direct confrontations which occur.

In the game we had, the player who was playing the Lorry Driver was way out in front after only a couple of game weeks' play. He'd usually spent his wages by Monday and was having no trouble in fulfilling the rest of his objectives. The gamesmaster ruled that although he was entitled to high Benefit Points for having lost his money so quickly, it was necessary for him to take on extra work to supplement his income. The player decided to take a Saturday job as a car mechanic at a garage in the centre of town. In that capacity he just about received the maximum of 20 Benefit Points from the gamesmaster who was asked to play the role of a customer wanting his Rover serviced. The conversation went something like this:-

GM: Excuse me. I know it's a bit late in the day, but could you please check a rattling noise which I've just discovered in my engine?
LD: Nah, sorry mate, we're booked up solid.
GM: Oh, it won't take you five minutes.
LD: Listen mate, I got a Cortina and a foreign job to do before I go 'ome tonight.
GM: But cou....
LD: Don't you hear right? I says we're booked SOLID and besides which we don't do Rovers.
GM: Please, can't you help me, it's so important as my family and I are supposed to be driving to Scotland tomorrow for our holidays.
LD: It's alright for some innit?
GM: Couldn't you take just a quick listen under the bonnet?
LD: Cahm orf it, you'll 'ave me under the bleedin' car next.
GM: Well, could you tell me who could help?
LD: Nah, don't know anyone who'd touch a Rover at this time of day, it bein' Saturday an' all. Listen mate, I'd like to 'elp ya, 'onest, but I ain't got the time, know wot I mean?
GM: I'll make it worth your while.
LD: Alright, bring it in.
GM: Well, what do you think?
LD: Ooh, dunno. Sounds bad to me, but not bein' a Rover expert, I wouldn't like to commit myself although I shouldn't be surprised if it don't need a recon unit. Listen, I know we're not Rover experts an' it'll probably cost ya a bit more an' all that, but I'll book it in for next monf, an' we'll give a good goin' over, alright? Do ya a favour, see?
GM: Can't you even tell me whether or not it will hold out for two weeks?
LD: Like I said, not bein' an expert, see, it's 'ard to say. I could say that it'll be O.K. an' then you go an' break down, an' where does that leave me, know wot I mean? You see it might be alright but then, on the other hand, it might not – it all depends, see. Now I don't want to send ya orf on ya 'olidays wiv a duff car, do I? Why don't ya get an 'ire car an' let me book you in for next monf.
GM: Isn't there anything you can do now?
LD: Sorry maye.....

And so it goes on. The direct confrontations are usually funny enough to keep the other players amused whilst not actually participating themselves and I suppose that they could always contribute to the awarding of Benefit points rather like ice skating judges.

So, there you are, Friday in Dundee, the first Japanese board game aimed at the Western market. Rather good I thought although I couldn't help feeling that there is more than an underlying tone of cynicism in it aimed at the British attitude to work which we could well do without even though Japan's car exports were up 2,400% last year whilst ours were down about 35%.

++IL++

NEWS ETC.

Avalon Hill games have gone up again in price following the continual drop in the value of the Pound against the Dollar and the average price per game is now £7.95. However, there are some new games out, the first being the American version of Andrew McNeil's superb game Kingmaker, which until now, had only been manufactured in the U.K. by Philmar. Inflation Strategy is also another new game and players must buy various stock, shares and various other commodities in an attempt to beat rising inflation. There is going to be another new game out in the summer entitled Caesar and this deals with Caesar's epic battle at Alesia. The game is set in 51BC and pits Julius Caesar and 12 Roman legions against the Gallic leader Vercingetorix and 350,000 Gauls. That, in itself, would not be all that impresive were it not for the unique position that these forces found themselves in. Vercingetorix and 100,000 Gauls were besieged in the town of Alesia. Caesar, realising that Gallic reinforcements would arrive before he could take the town, laid siege to it by erecting an amazing string of fortifications around the town - facing in both directions! When the relieving Gauls arrived, Caesar found himself outnumbered 6 to 1 and manning the rings of a giant tactical "doughnut". Interesting. Could be that Caesar is different enough to at least put a bit of life back into board wargames which, in my opinion, have been the same game in a different box over the last couple of years.

David Taylor of 53 Gorville Road, Bootle, Merseyside, L20 2LW has for sale 'Patrol' and 'Tank' at £2.00 each including postage.

The British Hexagonal Chess Federation will be holding the first ever hexagonal chess congress and exhibition from Friday 18th to Sunday 20th June at the Bloomsbury Centre Hotel , Coram Street, London WC1. There will be a tournament to establish the first British Champion in this new mode of the game. Hexagonal chess, invented and developed by Bill Glinski, is a game that has gained in popularity in recent years as well as receiving widespread recognition amongst cognoscenti of orthodox chess. Fancy your chances? I do not know if anybody can just enter the tournament but it might be worth a visit.

Just Games, 63 Brewer Street, London W1 have a couple of events going on at their place in the near future. On May 29th from 11.30 am onwards Magenta Wise, that well known fortune teller and witch will be explaining the art of tarot, its history and demonstrating its meanings. On June 12th from 11.30 am onwards George Hodges of the London Shogi Club will be demonstrating Shogi. Incidentally, the London Shogi Club now meets every Thursday at 6.00 pm at Knight Games, 33 Old Compton Street, London W1.

Milton Bradley, the second largest games manufacturer in the United States, have set up offices in London and hope to carve out a large slice of the U.K. games market for themselves from now on. The only game I've seen as yet is called Tank Trap and it looks, although I haven't played it, like a super double-deluxe version of a cross between Battleships and Tri-Tactics, if you've ever seen one of those.

Just how seriously do you take games? Serious enough to require a consultant? If so, your problems are solved. London Game Consultants, 194 Goldhurst Terrace, London NW6 has just been born and its sole propretor is David Wells who, amongst other things, is the inventor of Guerilla, an ex-British under 21 chess champion, a 2nd Dan Go master, Puzzles Editor of Games & Puzzles and a contributor to 'Modern Board Games'. "But," we asked David, "what can you DO?" To which he relied, "Good question, er, how about I can invent games to order, test and assess games, anything from simulations to abstract games to thematic family games to children's and educational games, advise on rules, presentation, marketing, advise on changes to games to fit them more closely to their intended market, provide research into effects of games, psychology of games playing, carry out market research in the games field....." Seriously folks, it might be more than worth your while contacting David if you are developing a game of your own which you hope to sell to a manufacturer as his advice will be invaluable and his rates acceptable.

++IL++

Competitive D&D

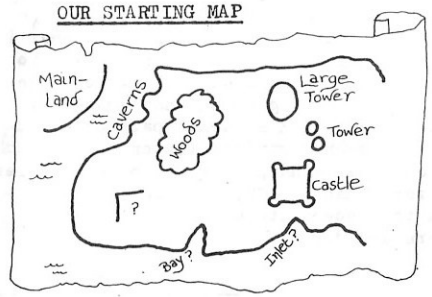
Chatting to various people about D&D, most are wildly enthusiastic about the idea of the game. After playing it, though, some are a little disappointed - the most frequent complaint being along the lines of: "Well it's not really a game, is it? There's no competition."

In fact there is competition, but it's of a different sort to conventional games; the players are playing against the Gamesmaster. Down at the University of Sussex Games Soc, though, a truly competitive variety of Dungeons & Dragons was designed a couple of months ago, by Craig Nye and Jeremy Clarke. In this version, each player was more or less on his own, with a definite end to the game and only one winner. The game lasted about four hours and was built around a quest for rings, each player trying to collect a 'set' of minor rings and then find "The One Ring" to win the game.

The setting was a fantastic island. As players, we were told by Craig and Jeremy (the GMs) that various types of rings (Warrior-Rings, Wizard-Rings, Dwarf-Rings and Elf-Rings) were hidden around the place and that each type was invisible to all but characters of the appropriate class (eg. only Magic-Users could see Wizard-Rings). Somewhere on the island was "The One Ring", and our objective was to collect one of each different type and then secure this "One Ring".

In order to get started quickly, the Rolling-for-Characters Phase was greatly simplified. We all started as First Level characters drawn from a hat (I drew a fighting Dwarf). We were automatically given average scores (11) in each Personality Attribute except our Prime Requisites, in which we were given scores of 18. We were allowed unlimited equipment (within encumbrance limits) and were finally given a vague map of the island as seen from the mainland:-

OUR STARTING MAP



As it turned out, we all paired up and explored in twos, although the knowledge that there could only be one winner made us naturally suspicious of our partners. In most cases, though, one member of the party died early on in the game and we were eventually wandering around on our lonesomes.

Pretty dull, you say? First Level characters would be too weak to last long on their own? Aha - but I haven't explained the full significance of the rings! Upon finding and wearing a ring of his own class, a character automatically jumped four levels. This meant that before too long, most characters were quite powerful.

My fighting dwarf discovered his first ring in an amphitheatre. In the centre of the arena was a chest on an altar, which looked quite tempting, but also highly suspect. Sure enough, as soon as the chest was opened, a stone statue (of a Gorgon!) sprang to life and came bellowing and snorting towards my poor little dwarf. Eventually, though, the Gorgon was poisoned and after slipping on the ring in the chest, my character had become a 4th Level Fighting Dwarf. Inspired by his success, he set off in the direction of "The Six Towers". Upon entering one of these, however, he was somewhat distraught to have the whole thing come crashing down around him and was lucky to escape with his life! Apparently he was being watched by Pete Mearns' Magic-User who had just found a Horn of Blasting. Hmmm - nasty things those Horns of Blasting!

Next stop was a sort of disused magical prison complex in which, after going round in circles for at least 20 minutes, he stumbled across an invisible box containing another ring! With this on his finger, he set off for the eastern end of the island through a pleasant-looking meadow. Pleasant enough, it turned out, until he entered it, when the long grass wrapped itself around his boots and would not let go, in spite of threats to take the boots off and unleash the fragrance 20 miles' hard marching upon the surrounding countryside! So he ended up padding around barefoot for the rest of the game.

The other players, meanwhile, were having plenty of problems of their own, but one had been fortunate enough to have been supplied with a map locating The One Ring by a Deck of Many Things and this, together with a Potion of Dragon Control (the Ring was guarded by dragons) enabled him to complete his quest and win the game.

(Contd. over)

COMPETITIVE D&D (Contd. from previous page)

In all, the idea worked very well, although both Craig and Jeremy agreed that they would make quite a few alterations for future games. For a start, the winner won simply by being lucky enough to find a treasure map. A better idea would perhaps have been to let the objective remain at one ring of each type, or to advance a character to a certain level. Many more clues should have been left so that players had goals at each stage, rather than wandering somewhat aimlessly around.

One point that became evident was that the game would have been impossible at the normal GM:Players ratio. Ideally, this should be 1:1, and 1:3 is an absolute maximum. Craig and Jeremy were hoping to be able to solve this problem by firing out dimensions, encounters, etc. to a player quickly, proceeding to the next player, and so on, in rapid rotation. In practice, however, this would never have worked.

Competitive D&D could quite easily be cut down to a 1½-2 hour game, by reducing objectives, and a simple system of this type would be an excellent little accessory to any GM's entourage of dungeons. But bear in mind that any such scheme ought really to be developed in conjunction with at least one other GM, as a single GM cannot possibly handle more than 3 separate parties - and even then each party can listen in on, and find out what's happening to, other parties. With more than one GM, though, it's impossible to concentrate on what the other players are doing.

++SJ++

IMAGE

As you may have heard, 3M the American games company and producers of Speed Circuit, Feudal, Stocks and Bonds, etc. have recently been taken over by Avalon Hill. Thus the old 3M games are likely to become something of collectors' items of the future. Their productions were without exception of superb quality as far as equipment and presentation were concerned and design standards were also generally high.

Described appropriately as "The game of personality profiles", Image is a card game in which each player tries to collect sequences of cards which describe famous persons. Equipment is simply a pack of special cards, a large plastic mat (playing board) and the rules, although a scorepad is included, presumably as a meagre attempt at giving value for money.

Cards are of various different types:

Type	Specific Examples
"Place"	Europe, England, US, etc.
"Time"	Pre-17th Cent, 20th Cent, etc.
"Activity"	Sports, Politics, Painter, etc.
"Status"	Fictional, Living, Female, etc.
"Letters"	A, B, C, etc.

The board has areas in which a few of each type of card may lie, face up. These form a sort of pool and may be used by players building up their own sequences. Around the outside of the board are sequence spaces which are filled by cards as the personality profile sequences are laid down.

The aim of the game is to collect sequences of the various card types which all relate to one particular personality. Once collected, these may be laid down (in any order - with the exception of the "Letters" cards) along the outside of the board. Complete sequences score points according to the number of cards being used; the more cards used in the sequence, the higher the score. "Letters" cards always complete the sequence, and must initial the name of the personality in question. An example of a sequence might be:

20th Century/Living/Literature/Male/England/Sport/L

As you've no doubt guessed, the personality in mind is none other than your friendly neighbourhood editor, Ian Livingstone, and for this sequence you would score 10 points.

Challenges are allowed, if a player disputes the validity of any of the cards in a particular sequence. If, for example, you would call Ian more dead than alive, you may challenge the "Living" card and if the other players agree, or you can find supporting evidence in an encyclopaedia, the player laying down the sequence is penalised.

What's it like as a game? Unfortunately it's fairly average, and quite a few of the rules don't really come into the game in practice. For example, the rules state that in a turn, a player may complete a profile, start a profile, substitute cards in a profile, or exchange some of his cards for fresh ones. However, since profiles are fairly easy to complete, everyone simply ends up laying down one particular sequence and scoring. There seems to be no point in starting off a sequence and leaving it to the next turn, as inevitably someone else will pinch it before then. In short, there is very little player interaction.

So basically, Image is a good idea which has not been developed fully. Any suggestions for our "Variations-on-a-theme Dept?"

++SJ++

BITS and PIECES

This is an article about bits and pieces - all those things which fall out of the box when you pick it up to start playing a game. Games manufacurers are irritating people. Not only do they produce games which are often utter rubbish - never buy a game which is named after a TV series - but they also market games which are completely unplayable because the rules don't make sense.

Even when they do manage to produce a good playable game they seem to lose heart when it comes to packaging and throw the whole thing into a flimsy box which soon disintegrates, spewing hundreds of tiny cardboard counters all over the place.

Down through the years I have tried all sorts of methods to organise my games. I am not naturally a tidy person, but when it comes to games I like to have a place for everything and everything in its place.

In the early days plastic egg boxes and ice cube trays provided the receptacles for all those bits of cardboard. Then I went through my magnetic period. This started when I discovered magnetic rubber - made by the Magnetic Rubber Company, Sheffield. With a self adhesive back and easily cut with scissors, it was a simple task to magnetise all these counters. The board, of course, had to be backed by metal - thin tin plate from the hardware shop but it only worked with thin card.

My biggest problem was 1829- that truly wonderful game. All those rail hexes to be 'organised'. I will not weary you with my various ploys. Sufficient to say, I discovered the sheets of plastic pockets which coin collecters use. The ones I bought have 20 pockets to each sheet costing 15p. The hexes slip in beautifully - and stay in until they are required.

The next thing was the organisation of money, share certificates and trains. Here I was lucky, I hit upon the idea of using tape cassette cases and managed to scrounge some from a music shop. The money just fits the slot and there is plenty of room for certificates and train cards. Each company has its own box which is handed over to the director at the appropriate time. Thus a player's money and the bits and pieces of each company are always kept seperately and there is none of that artful muddling when a train mysteriously gets transferred to the wrong pile.

So, the organisation of equipment is now solved but it would have made things a lot simpler if the manufacturers had at least included the coin pockets with the game.

Played over a period, 1829 is a most enjoyable game - far better than trying to rush it through in a mere evening. It is towards the end of the game that play becomes really cut-throat as the more complex junctions are played. I find that, to be really nasty, you need to get control of two companies which play immediately after each other. Then it is possible for the first company to substitute a new junction and place a token. By this sort of play it is sometimes possible to cut off a rival line.

P.S. I now find that 'glass clear' vinyl pages can be obtained from B.C.Young, 40 Ennismore Ave., Greenford, Middlesex who stock 20, 30 and 63 pocket pages at 14p each, post free on a minimum order of 50p which now means I can set about my next task - the organising of Kingmaker!

++Peter Cherry++

BOXED BORE AWARD

Nobody could have wished for a more thrilling finish to this poll. The voting, as it turned out, was evenly distributed between four games and even after a recount there was still a four-way tie - each game having only received one vote.

Yes, sadly we have to admit that the Boxed Bore Award was yet another failure with regard to getting response from you lot. Therefore, as the poll was declared void, we are unable to offer the person or persons who put their 1,2,3 of repugnant games in the same order as the result in the poll, a free night out, on behalf of the Workshop, with Raquel Welch.....

++IL++

Quote of the month

We've received a number of requests, notably one from Rene Descartes, for another quote of the month, following the first published last month. And so, here's another and it's from the famous 17th century philosopher, Daskolnikov Nietskipopovitch:

"A man without a woman is like a fish without a bicycle".